

# Proposed Changes to SPED Manual: Alternate Assessment

## *Glossary section*

**Alternate assessment.** A specific assessment, developed by the state in lieu of statewide assessments or by the district in lieu of districtwide assessments, designed to measure functional skills within the same domains required by the regular statewide or districtwide assessments. It is designed for students who are unable to demonstrate progress in the typical manner and who meet the state established criteria. An academic assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards that have been reduced in depth and complexity from the Idaho Content Standards. The alternate assessment (AA) is intended only for those students with the most significant cognitive impairments, representing about 1% of the total student population.

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**Significant cognitive impairment.** A designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for the purposes of their participation in AAs. Having a significant cognitive impairment is not solely determined by an IQ test score, nor based on a specific disability category, but rather a complete understanding of the complex needs of a student.

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## ***G. Statewide and Districtwide Achievement Testing Section***

3. ~~Alternate~~<sup>ive</sup> Assessments based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AAs)

AAs are a statewide testing option intended only for those students with the most significant cognitive impairments, in lieu of the general education assessment, with or without supports and accommodations. Participation in AAs reflects the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive impairment and requires that a student meet all participation ~~eligibility~~ criteria. Students with the most significant cognitive impairments represent about 1% of the total student population.

If the student cannot participate in some or all of the general assessments, the IEP shall contain a statement that includes the reason the student cannot participate in the general assessment and the alternate assessments—language arts, reading, math or science—in which the student will participate.

The IEP team shall consider a student's ~~eligibility to~~ participation in AAs on an annual basis using the participation criteria listed below. The IEP team shall document the student's testing status in the appropriate sections of the IEP.

a. ~~Students Eligible to Take Alternative Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards~~

~~A student must meet **all four** of the following participation criteria to be eligible to qualify for the AA. The IEP team shall find that the student meets all of the criteria listed below to determine that he or she is eligible to participate in the alternate assessment:~~

- ~~1) 1) — The student's demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive behavior prevent completion of the general academic curriculum even with program accommodations and/or adaptations; has a significant cognitive impairment.~~
  - ~~a) The student has a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact their adaptive skills **and** intellectual functioning.~~
  - ~~b) The student demonstrates academic **and** adaptive skills at a level substantially lower than that of other peers with disabilities.~~
  - ~~c) The student has adaptive skills well below average in two or more skill areas **and** intellectual functioning well below average (typically associated with an IQ below 55).~~
  - ~~a)d) Identifying a student as having a cognitive impairment does not mean the student automatically meets the criteria to participate in AAs.~~
- ~~2) 2) — The student's course of study is primarily functional skill and living skill oriented (typically not measured by State or district assessments); and is receiving academic instruction that is aligned with Idaho Extended Content Standards Core Content Connectors in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science.~~
  - ~~b)a) The student's instruction and IEP goals/objectives/benchmarks address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for the student.~~
- ~~3) 3) — The student's course of study is primarily adaptive skills oriented, typically not measured by state or district assessments. is unable to acquire, maintain, or generalize skills in multiple settings and to demonstrate performance of these skills without intensive and frequent individualized instruction.~~
  - ~~a) Adaptive skills are essential to living independently and functioning safely in daily life, and include, but are not limited to motor skills, socialization, communication, personal care, self-direction, functional academics, and personal health and safety.~~
- ~~4) The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.~~

- a) The student consistently requires individualized instruction in core academic and adaptive skills at a substantially lower level relative to other peers with disabilities.
  - b) It is extremely difficult for the student to acquire, maintain, generalize, and apply academic and adaptive skills in multiple settings, across all content areas, even with high-quality extensive/intensive pervasive, frequent, and individualized instruction.
  - c) The student requires pervasive supports, substantially adapted materials, and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.
- b. ~~Students Not Eligible to Take Alternative Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards~~

— ~~Students are not to be included~~ shall not qualify to participate in Alternative Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards ~~for solely based on~~ any of the following reasons:

- 1) ~~1)~~ Having a disability
- 2) Poor attendance or extended absences
- 3) Native language/social, cultural or economic difference
- 4) Expected poor performance or past basic/below basic performance on the regular education assessment
- 5) Academic and other services student receives
- 6) Educational environment or instructional setting
- 7) Percent of time receiving special education services
- 8) English Language Learner (ELL) status
- 9) Low reading level/achievement level
- 10) Anticipated disruptive behavior
- 11) Impact of student scores on the accountability system
- 12) Administration decision
- 13) Anticipated emotional distress
- 14) Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in the assessment
- 1) ~~The only determining factor is that the student has an IEP;~~
- 2) ~~—~~
- 3) ~~2) — The student is academically behind because of excessive absences or lack of instruction; or~~
- 4) ~~—~~
- 5) ~~3) — The student is unable to complete the general academic curriculum because of socioeconomic or cultural differences.~~